

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

1. (Currently Amended): A recombinant microorganism comprising a heterologous polynucleotide that encodes a heterologous protein or polypeptide, and from which prepared by transferring, to a mutant strain of microorganism from which any of *Bacillus subtilis* genes one or more of the following genes have been deleted or knocked-out *comA, yopO, treR, yvbA, cspB, yvAN, yttP, yurK, yozA, licR, sigL, mntR, glcT, yvdE, ykvE, slr, rocR, ccpA, yaaT, yyaA, yycH, yacP, hprK, rsiX, yhdK, and ylbO,* ~~or one or more genes functionally equivalent to any of these genes have been deleted or knocked out, a gene encoding a heterologous protein or polypeptide.~~
2. (Currently Amended): The recombinant microorganism as claimed in of claim 1, wherein the microorganism is *Bacillus subtilis* or another bacterium belonging to the genus *Bacillus*.
3. (Currently Amended): The recombinant microorganism of claim 1 as claimed in claim 1 or 2, wherein one or more regions selected from among a transcription initiation regulatory region, a translation initiation regulatory region, and a secretion signal region is ligated to an upstream region of a gene encoding a heterologous protein or polypeptide.
4. (Currently Amended): The recombinant microorganism as claimed in of claim 3, wherein the one or more regions are three regions constituted by a transcription initiation regulatory region, a translation initiation regulatory region, and a secretion signal region.

5. (Currently Amended): The recombinant microorganism of claim 3 as claimed in claim 3 or 4, wherein the secretion signal region is derived from a cellulase gene of a bacterium belonging to the genus *Bacillus* and the transcription initiation regulatory region and the translation initiation regulatory region are each derived from a 0.6 to 1 kb region upstream of the cellulase gene.

6. (Currently Amended): The recombinant microorganism as claimed in of claim 4, wherein the three regions constituted by the transcription initiation regulatory region, the translation initiation regulatory region, and the secretion signal region are a nucleotide sequence of base numbers 1 to 659 of a cellulase gene of SEQ ID NO: 1; a nucleotide sequence of base numbers 1 to 696 of a cellulase gene of SEQ ID NO: 3; a DNA fragment having a nucleotide sequence having 70% homology with either of these nucleotide sequences; or a DNA fragment having a nucleotide sequence lacking a portion of any one of these nucleotide sequences.

7. (Currently Amended): A method for producing a protein or polypeptide comprising:  
growing or culturing the recombinant microorganism of claim 1 for a time and under conditions suitable for expression of said heterologous protein or polypeptide, and recovering said heterologous protein or polypeptide  
by use of a recombinant microorganism as defined in any one of claims 1 through 6.

8. (New): A recombinant microorganism that is *Bacillus* comprising a heterologous polynucleotide that encodes a heterologous protein or polypeptide,

wherein said microorganism has one or more of the following *Bacillus* genes deleted or knocked-out *comA*, *yopO*, *treR*, *yvbA*, *cspB*, *yvAN*, *yttP*, *yurK*, *yozA*, *licR*, *sigL*, *mntR*, *glcT*, *yvdE*, *ykvE*, *rocR*, *ccpA*, *yaaT*, *yyaA*, *yyCH*, *yacP*, *hprK*, *rsiX*, *yhdK*, and *ylbO*.

9 (New): The microorganism of claim 8 which is *Bacillus subtilis* having one or more *Bacillus subtilis* genes selected from the group consisting of *comA*, *yopO*, *treR*, *yvbA*, *cspB*, *yvAN*, *yttP*, *yurK*, *yozA*, *licR*, *sigL*, *mntR*, *glcT*, *yvdE*, *ykvE*, *rocR*, *ccpA*, *yaaT*, *yyaA*, *yyCH*, *yacP*, *hprK*, *rsiX*, *yhdK*, and *ylbO* deleted or knocked-out.

10. (New): The recombinant microorganism of claim 9 from which *rocR* has been deleted or its expression knocked out.

11. (New): The recombinant microorganism of claim 9 from which *sigL* has been deleted or its expression knocked out.

12. (New): A method for producing a protein or polypeptide comprising:  
growing or culturing the recombinant microorganism of claim 8 for a time and under conditions suitable for expression of said heterologous protein or polypeptide, and recovering said heterologous protein or polypeptide.

13. (New): A method for producing a protein or polypeptide comprising:  
growing or culturing the recombinant microorganism of claim 9 for a time and under conditions suitable for expression of said heterologous protein or polypeptide, and recovering said heterologous protein or polypeptide.

14. (New): A method for producing a protein or polypeptide comprising:  
growing or culturing the recombinant microorganism of claim 10 for a time and under  
conditions suitable for expression of said heterologous protein or polypeptide, and  
recovering said heterologous protein or polypeptide.

15. (New): A method for producing a protein or polypeptide comprising:  
growing or culturing the recombinant microorganism of claim 11 for a time and under  
conditions suitable for expression of said heterologous protein or polypeptide, and  
recovering said heterologous protein or polypeptide.